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SUBJECT Interview with Dr. Georgi Arbatov

GEORGE HERMAN: Dr. Arbatov, last summer you said that Moscow and Washington were on a collision course, relations in a very bad state. How would you analyze the state of relations since the crisis of martial law in Poland?

GEORGI ARBATOV: I think they have become still worse, the relations; but not because of the events in Poland themselves, I think because the Administration of United States has used these events to create some sort of international crisis, to internationalize the events in Poland.

ANNOUNCER: From CBS News Moscow and Washington, a spontaneous and unrehearsed news interview on Face the Nation with Dr. Georgi Arbatov, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and Director of the U.S.A. Institute of the Soviet Union's Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Arbatov will be questioned in Moscow by CBS News Moscow correspondent Don McNeil, and in Washington by CBS News diplomatic correspondent Robert Pierpoint and by the moderator, CBS News correspondent George Herman.

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HERMAN: Dr. Arbatov, if tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union were already high, as you've said, why should not the break down of order in an important state lying between the two countries, doing business with both of them, not be of considerable concern to the United States, not be an exacerbation of those tensions?

ARBATOV: Excuse me. I didn't got the point of your

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question.

HERMAN: Well, the point of my question was that in your first answer you said that relations between the United States and the Soviet Union had worsened, but not because of martial law in Poland.

ARBATOV: Oh, yes.

HERMAN: And my question is, since Poland is a country with which both countries, the United States and the Soviet Union, do business, have trade, have relations, how can the imposition of martial law, the break down of order in that country not exacerbate the existing tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union?

ARBATOV: Well, you know, you have to have in mind what -- actually, what the options were and why the martial law was introduced. And it was clear to everybody, I think it was clear to Americans, that the events in Poland go to a con -- on a confrontation course, there will be seriousness disturbances. In the assessment of Polish government, in our assessment, in assessment of many people in the West, it was heading in direction, actually, of civil war. And this would be -- and chaos and full, complete economical breakdown.

All of this, I think, would be even worse than martial law. And this was why the martial law was introduced, introduced. It wasn't coup d'etat. The martial law was introduced by the, you know, legitimate head of the government of Poland and by leadership of Poland. And actually, this is not such abnormal procedure.

ROBERT PIERPOINT: Dr. Arbatov?

ARBATOV: Yes.

PIERPOINT: Doctor, Secretary Haig and other American officials have said that the Soviet Union was deeply involved in the imposition of martial law in Poland, as you know. They say, for instance, that the orders to impose martial law were actually printed in the Soviet Union. They say that Marshal Kulikov and a hundred other Soviet officers were in a bunker in Warsaw monitoring events.

I'd like to ask your version of what degree of involvement the Soviet Union had in the imposition of martial law in Poland.

ARBATOV: The Soviet Union was not involved in the imposition of martial law in Poland. It was a decision made by Polish government at the moment when Polish government and the

leadership of Poland has chosen it.

And, well, you know, the Secretary of State Haig and many others tell a lot of nonsense all the year around. So I cannot be responsible and nobody can be responsible for what they say about Salvador and hit teams from Libya and a lot of things. They are creating crisis after crisis.

DON MCNEIL: But, Dr. Arbatov, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union indicated last July that it was very unhappy with what was going on in Poland. There was pressure coming from Moscow all the time on the Polish Communist Party to do something about Solidarity. Surely, you can't deny that there was certainly a great degree of Soviet pressure. You people did not like what Solidarity was doing.

ARBATOV: Well, you know, we didn't -- you shouldn't use the word Solidarity simple. It's simply misleading people, because Solidarity is not forbidden, not banned by -- even under martial law. This measure was taken against extremists who really -- who wanted a crisis in Poland. And some extremists in the United States wanted it. They wanted our troops to march in in Poland. They would be happy for it. And I think that also the reaction taken by Americans is at least partially explained by, you know, such as emotions, that this is some sort like a revenge to the Poles and Soviet Union that they haven't -- have somehow avoided this international crisis.

MCNEIL: But surely, you cannot claim that the Special Services, as the Tass statement says, of the United States had a hand in there. It would be an incredible job for those so-called Special Services to recruit the hearts and minds of nine million people, wouldn't it?

ARBATOV: Well, you know, I am sure that nine million people are not against socialism in Poland, is not against Polish government. It goes about a much smaller amount of people, maybe a few dozens or hundreds.

But, well, you know, I would even say about the pressure which you said, I don't really want to excuse myself. Yes, we didn't like what happens in Poland. And I think nobody had reasons to like it. Because it was dangerous not only for the Poles, it was dangerous for the whole international situation, in Poland and in the world at large. Many Americans have told me about it a year ago and this year, that this is really very dangerous. And nothing -- really, what has happened there that we have to excuse? What crime have we committed or Jaruzelski has committed? He has avoided maybe civil-war bloodshed. And I don't know what is proposed to him as an option.

And by the way, it was many countries. You shouldn't

use so easily the double standards. The United States has laws according to which the President of United States has rights to introduce, you know, National Guard and Army, etcetera, under extreme situations. And these rights were used, I think, nine times, at least, since World War II. And Canada has introduced it. And British troops are fighting in Northern Ireland...

PIERPOINT: Let me ask you this. Why was it necessary to impose martial law? What is wrong with the Communist system that required the imposition of martial law? Is it not a breakdown of your own system that you have to impose martial law in a country like Poland?

ARBATOV: Well, you know, not a single system, neither capitalist system nor Communist system, is immune from mistakes made by people who concretely had the economy, had the political life, etcetera. And we had a lot of breakdowns all over the world in different societies. I can name them. I don't want to wrap up the time. But -- and in these situations, extreme measures are being taken. It is not a nice procedure. I think everybody would like to avoid it. But by itself, it doesn't comprise a violation of international law or United Nations Charter or other documents.

[Confusion of voices]

HERMAN: I just wanted to say, Dr. Arbatov, to explore. You said you make no bones about it, you were unhappy with some of the things that was going inside -- that were going on inside Poland. I'd like to explore a little bit what it is that you are unhappy about.

Is it consistent with the Communist Party system, as you understand it -- and you are an expert on it -- to have an independent labor movement?

ARBATOV: Well, you know, I am more an expert on the United States than on Poland.

HERMAN: Well, you know it works in the United States.

ARBATOV: I had the same questions after the air traffic controller, whether it is consistent or non-consistent with American system to have free labor movement in the United States.

But here, you know, it is consistent. Solidarity was not forbidden. Actually, this system is new. And the labor movement in all socialist countries is developing. It has its place. I don't know what would happen in the United States if AFL-CIO would call on for general elections to oust the government, to do away with Constitution, what the reaction of the government would be.

HERMAN: But, more specifically...

ARBATOV: But until it is a labor union which fulfills its labor union's tasks, I think it is -- it has a right to development. And what happens in Poland, I think, to a certain stage, even represented some very interesting and positive developments.

HERMAN: Just to make sure I understand it. The problem in the past, the labor unions in the Soviet Union, at least to our eyes, have been government labor unions, not independent labor unions. Are you now saying that a totally independent labor union not affiliated with the Communist Party is acceptable?

ARBATOV: Well, you know, here you repeat simply some of the cliches of the Kremlinologists and Sovietologists saying this is governmental trade unions, etcetera. It is much more complicated. But I don't know whether we have time for such, you know, such extensive discussion of the creeds and of the systems.

I can explain to you that the labor union here is elected, is free. It has really serious rights.

HERMAN: But the question is...

ARBATOV: And I, as an employer of a small quantity of people, can tell you that they bind me on some occasions, my hands and feet. I cannot -- I cannot dismiss without their agreement. I cannot...

HERTMAN: But, Dr. Arbatov...

MCNEIL: You can't impose martial law.

ARBATOV: Yes. I can't impose martial law. I cannot, also, throw out...

MCNEIL: You said martial law is unpleasant and painful. Can you tell us, do you know when martial law is going to be lifted in Poland?

ARBATOV: I don't know, and I think it depends -- it is a decision which the Poles will make. It depends on the situation there. I am absolutely sure that Jaruzelski and the leadership of Poland do want to do away with it as soon as possible.

PIERPOINT: Dr. Arbatov...

ARBATOV: And their only aim is normalization -- excuse me. I have to answer this important question. And I think that United States just now, with this policy, is not helping them. Because what they do is encouraging the people who are against

any compromise, against any settlement there. And this can bring, really, to some complications and make the task of Polish...

MCNEIL: That's not precisely true. The United States is saying that you should have a free labor movement, that Poland seemed to want. And it also says that the people who've been arrested should be released.

ARBATOV: Well, you know, this -- the United States has -- it's not a business of United States to tell the Poles what they should do. Just as it wouldn't be the business of Poles to tell the United States government what to do with the air traffic controller or what to do with, you know, with Weathermen or I don't know whom, with Black Panthers, etcetera, etcetera.

PIERPOINT: Dr. Arbatov...

ARBATOV: At Kent University, you know, this National Guard who went to the Kent University.

So it's the Poles' business. They have to do it.

MCNEIL: I think you have a question from New York.

PIERPOINT: Dr. Arbatov.

ARBATOV: Yes.

PIERPOINT: We're in Washington, by the way.

MCNEIL: Washington. Sorry. Of course.

PIERPOINT: I have a question related to how Poland is going to affect relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. This past week, Secretary Haig said in Brussels that number one on his agenda in his discussions with Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko on the 26th and 27th of January in Geneva, number one on the agenda would be the crisis caused by Poland.

How do you see the Polish crisis affecting Soviet-American relations?

ARBATOV: Well, I told you already that it is affecting in a very bad way. But it is not because of what is going on in Poland itself. That is, of course, a very complicated situation there. But I think it didn't develop in the worst possible case as it could, and now it is heading to some sort of normalization, as we understand it.

[Confusion of voices]

ARBATOV: Because of what Americans -- American government is doing, and also making its allies to do around Poland. And this is very dangerous because this is really a blow against the fundamentals of the relations of peaceful coexistence.

MCNEIL: Would it specifically affect the arms talks.

ARBATOV: Maybe it is not yet understood.

MCNEIL: I think what we mean is will it specifically affect the arms talks?

ARBATOV: It will affect everything. Because if it is a beginning of actually very old story, when the capitalist countries wanted to make us behave as they wanted, to change our system, to do as they wanted, not to allow us to work and live as we have chosen, our country or other socialist countries, we shall of course be completely against it with all our force. And I think this policy has a long history. It has started in 1917, after our revolution, with a military intervention against Soviet Union. Then was a long period of sanctions, economic boycott, and all sorts of things.

I thought that after 50 years of such experience, or 55, the West at last got to their [unintelligible] it brings nothing, actually. And we should live on basis of peaceful coexistence.

PIERPOINT: Dr. Arbatov...

ARBATOV: We don't like a lot of things going on in the United States or Pakistan or Turkey. You know, Turkey is now trying to teach the Poles how to deal with labor unions, when they have 250 labor union leaders on the bench in their...

MCNEIL: If we could...

ARBATOV: ...now under court-martial.

MCNEIL: If we could be a little bit more specific, though. President Reagan has not said that he will not have a summit next year. President Brezhnev said some time ago, last February, he thought it might be a good idea.

Do you think that we will have a summit meeting in the coming year?

ARBATOV: Well, I don't know. I -- you know, it depends. If the United States behaves in the way it tends to behave just now, you know, going from one -- I have the impression, really, that the people, a lot of people -- I don't give any names -- but many people who are in the government, they have come with such

ideas, political ideas, that -- which doesn't work, really. And they have either to change their policy or to change the whole world situation...

HERMAN: Dr. Arbatov...

ARBATOV: ...to create a permanent crisis. What they are trying to do, through Libya, through this outcry about Soviet terror in Central America, and now with Poland...

[Confusion of voices]

ARBATOV: ...respond yes or no from this moment.

HERMAN: Let me ask you this. I have the impression from listening to your rather strong words on some of these things that the American sanctions against the Soviet Union over Poland have begun to sting a little bit, have begun to hurt you. You seem to be a little unusually angry.

ARBATOV: Oh, no. I can assure you that this is not the cause. And, you know, the sanction -- the sanction, this has become almost a model of behavior for United States. We have the second time in two years the sanctions.

HERMAN: The first was over Afghanistan.

ARBATOV: And for what we did, another time for what our allies did. The next time maybe it will be because Mount Helen has erupted or there was an earthquake somewhere.

And so, it makes us think twice now whether Americans are partners with whom you should trade. The trade is negligible. It won't hurt us, really. Aside from the trade is bigger with grain. But here, I think, here nothing has changed up till now. If it will change, it will hurt American farmers, I think, not less than the Soviet...

MCNEIL: But people on your own streets here in Moscow, Russian citizens, have said to me when I ask them about Poland, "It could hurt us. It could cost us, 'cause we have to bail Poland out." And they were angry about it.

Poland is costing you.

ARBATOV: Well, you know, of course, everything costs. It costs you a lot. For instance, this crisis situation which was established in the United States cost you a lot because you have tremendous armaments expenses. And they think...

MCNEIL: ...you do.



ARBATOV: Well, it is impossible for us to have such expenses, expenditure as you have. And it costs you a lot. So it is not reasonable.

I won't deny it. And this is one of the reasons, one of the major reasons. The major reason is to avoid nuclear war. But one of the reasons is to avoid such luxuries of life, as you know, unnecessary spending, some armaments or on some other things.

HERMAN: Dr. Arbatov...

ARBATOV: And this is mutual, a matter of mutual interest, I'm sure.

HERMAN: Dr. Arbatov, this year the Polish government has to come up with \$7 1/2 billion in debts to be rolled over. If the Western bankers do not come up with this money, would the Soviet Union allow its fraternal ally to go bankrupt?

ARBATOV: I don't know. But I think before the demands make -- the banks in the West make some demands on Poland, they should also think twice about the financial consequences. Because I am afraid that the world economy in general is not in a perfect condition now, and financial markets. So you shouldn't be reckless doing any things here.

PIERPOINT: Do you think...

ARBATOV: And this is a serious, serious matter which should be -- I am not a specialist, really...

PIERPOINT: Do you think that the United States and the Western World should continue to finance events in Poland even when the Polish government is doing things such as jailing Lech Walesa, jailing thousands of people, and we should still continue to finance that?

ARBATOV: You never -- you know, you never put Poland or any other socialist country on list of charity. This was business. And you entered into this with hopes and Polish commitments that the money will be returned, returned with good profit. And it will be.

Well, now Poland has, as sometimes Britain had and Italy had and many other countries had. It happens. Poland has got into difficulties. Now it's for Poland, for its allies, also for others to think it over, how to -- what to make, actually. What does the West want to make? If it wants to hurt, some people hurt Poland, it will cost additional money to the West as well. It will cost sometimes to Poland, but also to the West.

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Otherwise, Poland plans to repay its debts to the West. And I'm sure it will do it.

PIERPOINT: Dr. Arbatov, before we finish -- and I don't think we have too much time -- how many troops does the Soviet Union have in Afghanistan now, and why are they there, and when will they leave?

ARBATOV: Well, they will leave the moment we have negotiations, we have an agreement reached -- which they have, actually, Afghans have the agreement reached with Pak -- with its neighbors, Pakistan, fundamentally, that no incursions of military personnel armed by United States and China and some other countries goes into Afghans' territory. At the moment there is such agreement, Soviet Union will withdraw its troops.

MCNEIL: How many are there?

HERMAN: Thank you very much, Dr. Georgi Arbatov, for being our guest today on Face the Nation.